DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 438 CE 039 752

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TITLE Assuming Multiple Roles: The Time Crunch.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; *Child Rearing; *Dual Career Family; Employed Parents; *Employed Women; Family Life; Family Relationship; Family Structure; Females; Homemakers; *Home Management; Job Simplification; Males; Sex Role; *Time Management

ABSTRACT

Women's increased labor force participation and continued responsibility for most household work and child care have resulted in "time crunch." This strain results from assuming multiple roles within a fixed time period. The existence of an egalitarian family has been assumed by family researchers and writers but has never been verified. Time management studies have consistently shown that American families spend close to 50 hours per week in unpaid household work. The nonemployed wife performs most of these services; employed homemakers have dealt with their "time crunch" problems by reducing time spent in household work and leisure. Virtually no shift has occurred in household work assumption by the male. One researcher has suggested that shifting household work to the husband, who is viewed as the primary income provider, may not be the answer. Two persons in the family would then be under increased stress. The family can either change to address the problem, or women can use time management techniques. Time management involves assessing what one wants to achieve, sequencing activities, and completing tasks. Work simplification strategies should be used to enhance family members in terms of task accomplishment. (Three tables are appended.) (YLB)

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ASSUMING MULTIPLE ROLES: THE TIME CRUNCH

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October, 1984

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ASSUMING MULTIPLE ROLES: THE TIME CRUNCH

Each year for the last thirty years we have seen an increasing number of women joining the paid labor force [Hayghe, 1976; Masnick and Bane, 1980; US Census, 1982]. Along with this increase in labor force participation, women have continued to assume most of the responsibilities for household work and child care [Walker, 1982]. These trends together have resulted in "time crunch" [Fox and Nickols, 1983]. That is, strain resulting from assuming multiple roles within a fixed time period.

Researchers have been interested in the ideal of time management for years. Some of the first formal studies were done as early as 1915 [Bailey, 1915]. These studies have provided a limited amount of information in regards to what tasks were assigned to family members and what could be accomplished under constrained conditions [Bailey, 1915; Brossard, 1926; and Rowe, 1917]. Later studies focused on time as a measure of household production [Robinson, 1977; Walker and Woods, 1976]. These studies assessed the amount of time men, women, and children expended on household work and attempted to assign a monetary value to this unpaid labor.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, an assessment will be made to determine what time is. Second, time will be discussed in terms of the roles people assume and third, the effective use of time management techniques will be explored.

Time is a central resource. That is, the use of other resources involves the consumption of time. In this context, time is a facilitator. However, time does afford constraints, the biggest being its inelastic supply. All persons, regardless of their station in life, have 24 hours each day. Time cannot be hoarded for future consumption. Each day begins with a new 24 hours. As demands on our time increase due to occupational commitments, time becomes scarcer. Money is most constraining to people with limited incomes, while time is more often limiting to the affluent [Deacon and Firebaugh, 1981].

The effective and efficient use of time varies greatly with the roles individuals assume. As stated earlier, most of the recent studies done on time management have focused on the use of time in relation to household work. Theories that explore delegation of responsibilities pose the idea that families that are more egalitarian will have a far more equal distribution of work between husbands and wives than families that are more traditional. Table 1 shows a comparison between four different family types in regards to the way they view role responsibilities, household work, and income earning and allocation. The four family types compared are the traditional, moderately traditional, neogalitarian, moderately egalitarian, and the egalitarian. In the egalitarian family, responsibilities are assigned according to the persons most capable of performing the task, whereas in the traditional family social norms dictate role assumption.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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The existence of the egalitarian family has been assumed by family researchers and writers, but has never been verified [Poloma and Garlend, 1971]. Safilios-Rothschild [1969] suggests that the egalitarian family may be a myth perpetuated by the secondary source of family textbooks and not supported by actual research. An evaluation of families needs to be made to determine if the egalitarian family type does exist. Two possible ways to determine how egalitarian a family is:

1. By studying its decision making behavior and,
2. By assessing the family's division of labor [Safilios-Rothschild, 1969].

Because this paper is only focusing on time management, the concept of the division of labor within the family will be the only idea explored.

Time management studies have consistently shown that families in America spend close to 50 hours per week in unpaid household work and that services provided through this median are performed mostly by the nonemployed wife [Vanek, 1974; Walker and Wood, 1976; Robinson, 1977; and Hefferan, 1982]. The husband contributes very little time to household work and his time is usually spent in house and car maintenance, child care, and taking out the garbage [Fox and Nickols, 1983]. The employed mother was found to delegate some child care to others. However, the sharing of tasks by others and the use of paid help occurred very infrequently. Walker and Wood [1976] found that

employed homemakers have dealt with their "time crunch" problems by reducing the time spent in household work and leisure. The time consumed in these two areas was reduced by one- third to one- half the time spent in the non employed homemaker.

It is interesting to note that even with increased paid labor force participation of women, there has been virtually no shift in household work assumption by the male. A number of studies have found that the most important factors in determining the amount of household work done by families were: number of children, the age of children, and the employment of the wife outside the home. However, wife's employment had no effect on the hours spent by husbands or children in household work [Burk and Burk, 1978; Ferber and Brinbaum, 1971; Model, 1981; Nickels, 1976; Walter and Woods, 1976]. Ferber and Brinbaum [1977] stated that the family's division of labor had little resemblance to a rational maximizing unit. That is, generating the maximum satisfaction at the minimum cost.

There is a little hope for improvement in the state of the arts. Comparisons of studies done in the 1960's to those completed in the 1970's indicate that married men have increased their household time slightly, however, married employed women have decreased their household work time drastically [Robinson, 1977]. Fox and Nickols [1983] found that employed wives tended to divide their time equally between their homes and their jobs. This was not the case for husbands; they tend to devote about 80% of their work time to the job and the remaining 20% to their homes [Fox and Nickols, 1983].

One researcher [Pleck, 1977] suggested that maybe shifting household work to the husband was not the answer. Rather than having

one person in the family suffering from "time crunch", reallocating work to the husband would result in two persons in the family under increased stress. The results of this increased stress could be viewed as negative because it could weaken the family unit.

Pleck [1977] suggested that in our present economy, men are rewarded more for their labor force participation than women and are likely to be viewed as the primary income providers. Therefore, they should not be expected to contribute as many hours in household work as women who are not valued in our social system as highly. This concept was supported in a study by Poloma and Garland [1971] who found that the assumption of a professional role by the wife does not mean a drastic change in family roles. In only one case study of 53 dual professionals did an egalitarian style family exist. In all the other cases, the wife was responsible for the traditional tasks and the husband was responsible for providing family status and income. Russell [1982] found that when there were children under three years of age in the family, fathers were slightly more involved when mothers were employed.

If this trend is to continue and there is no change in our social system, what can women do to deal with this "time crunch" problem? Can change be implemented in the family that will address this problem?

If change is the answer, certain conditions must be met to facilitate the process. Change begins with the unfreezing of old elements in the situation, followed by movement to a new level and finally freezing at the new level [Gross, Crandall and Knoll, 1981]. The unfreezing begins when motivations for change have been

identified. This process is initiated by the examination of one's values. The closer the behavior to be changed is to one's values, the more difficult it is to implement change. In the case of changing the role of women in regards to household work, success is largely depending on change in the role of other family members, which can result in social change [O'Neill and O'Neill, 1972].

Movement to a new level in the change process is often accompanied by increased amounts of stress. This resistance of change can be strong enough to reduce the motivation thus resulting in a return to the original state. Resistance to new role assumptions can originate within the family as well as be generated from the broader society. Once movement to a new level has occurred families often revert back to their original behavior because they are not aware of the necessity to "freeze" this new level.

Freezing is accomplished through repeated use. During this repeated use evaluation must occur. This evaluation is done in the form of checking against the new role you want to assume. Garlington [1982] suggested that it takes about eight weeks for a new concept to become a habit. Evaluation is still needed once freezing occurs. However, this checking should occur only occasionally [Gross, Crandall, and Knoll, 1980].

Time management begins by assessing what one wants to achieve in their lives. When this is accomplished, then plans can be developed that would insure the completion of those objectives considered to be important. The "Gilbreth Questions" can be useful in assessing process [Gilbreth, 1959]. Although these questions were developed as a task improvement strategy it can be seen in Table 2 that they can be

applied to any task to be accomplished by the family. The improvement that results from task completion can enhance one's quality of life.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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The next phase of time management begins with a sequencing of activities. This can best be accomplished via the use of time schedules. However, time schedules are only appropriate when the time necessary for task completion is known. Knowing the time per task reduces frustration and stress because realistic expectations are realized. This means that successful task completions will increase. Also, priorities are easier to establish.

There are other methods used to enhance individuals/family members in terms of task accomplishment. These methods are referred to as work simplification strategies. The primary purpose of these strategies is to develop techniques that will minimize and reduce the use of one's resources [Swanson, 1981]. Table 3 shows some of the examples of these techniques. These strategies allow the individual and family members to work smarter, not harder.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Before beginning any of the work simplification strategies it is important to remember that everyone has an individual time and/or energy cycle. That is, a time of day in which they are more productive. Time management can be greatly enhanced if this peek production time can be identified. This allows one individual to

schedule demands in conjunction to their high energy levels. Mismatching family demand with low energy time can cause frustration and stress. Matching family demands with the individuals prime time can be stress reducing.

There are many other time saving techniques that can be utilized to reduce the stress and strain on the individual operating in a "time crunch." Women need to avoid the "super women syndrome." They must realize that they cannot do it all. Engaging the help of other family members is a must. The biggest enhancer of time is the two letter word "NO!" Don't assume more responsibilities than can be handled.

When planning for meals and meal preparation there are some simple rules to follow. Plan menus for the week, use a list and shop no more than once a week. Dovetail activities. Have an old fashioned baking day where when the oven is on bake as much as it will hold. Preparing more than one dish at a time or doubling the recipe and freezing one dish until later are also good time saving activities. Learn to take shortcuts. Use convenience food. However, don't waste time shopping for those items that are not readily available. The average homemaker spends about 30 minutes a day preparing food; this is a reduction in meal preparation time, but the time for marketing and shopping have increased [Walker, 1983]. Purchase a dishwasher. Use a microwave oven. Microwave ovens are only time savers when they are used for more than heating water and leftovers. It is also important to remember, as you increase the number of appliances you own, you also increase the amount of time necessary for care of those appliances.

As more women enter the labor force, they can expect increased pressures on their time. These pressures can be relieved to some extent as they change their perceptions concerning their household tasks. The expectation that husbands will assume more responsibilities for household work has not been substantiated in recent research, therefore, the major thrust will be in the form of changed female behavior. This changed behavior may be in the mode of adjusted standards, realistic expectations and children trained to assume responsibilities.

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Table 1

Family Assessment

Traditional	Moderately Traditional	Moderately Egalitarian	Egalitarian
Roles			
• Highly uncomfortable and/or reacts negatively to role sharing	• Encourages traditional roles, but open to breaking some tradition • Somewhat uncomfortable when pressured to do something not within one's own view of roles	• Comfortable doing nontraditional tasks • Willing to share and and negotiate tasks • Seldom avoids a task task for gender reasons	• Open and willing to share roles • Actively involved in working out an egalitarian lifestyle
Household Work			
• "Men's work" and "women's work" • Not willing to change	• "Men's work" and "women's work," but a willingness to "help out" occasionally	• Men and women are capable capable of many tasks • Willing to share in nontraditional tasks	• No task beyond actual childbirth is gender linked • Will initiate non-traditional tasks without being asked
Money			
• Income provider as "breadwinner" is man's contribution	• Income provided by husband/father is major contribution to family life	• Provided income is only a part of a man's total contribution to family	• "Co-provider"

Table 2

The Gilbreth Questions

What?

When?

Where?

By Whom?

How

I. WHY - Preliminary question to be answered about the task as a whole. Reflects the values and standards of the individual/family.

II. WHAT - Involves breaking the task into its parts:

- get ready
- do
- clean up

III. HOW - Involves choosing the appropriate person, place and equipment for the task. It answers the questions as to:

When?

Where?

By Whom?

Table 3

Work Simplification Strategies

I. Improve Work Methods

- eliminate unnecessary steps and work
- revise procedures
- use new plans
- make substitutions
- dovetail activities
- use lists

II. Divide Responsibilities

- household work is not sex-linked
- assign tasks to persons with skills appropriate for task
- share/cooperate in task completion
- allow children to help

III. Use Principles of Body Mechanics

- maintain paced rhythm
- use largest muscles possible
- keep body in alignment
- optimum work heights for tasks
- keep heads near the body

IV. Become Motion Minded

- circular motions
- logical flow (right to left in most cases)
- linear motions
- make use of multiples (both hands; feet and hands, trays)